Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation
Water Resources Division
Water Rights Bureau

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
For Routine Actions with Limited Environmental Impact

Part I. Proposed Action Description

1. Applicant/Contact name and address: Donna Allison, 155 East Hodgeman Canyon, Bozeman, MT 59718

2. Type of action: Application for Beneficial Water Use Permit 43C 30109444

3. Water source name: Stillwater River

4. Location affected by project: Section 32, T4S, R16E, Stillwater County

5. Narrative summary of the proposed project, purpose, action to be taken, and benefits: The applicant proposes to divert water from the Stillwater River, by means of a pump, from April 14 to October 15 at 20 GPM up to 9.0 AF, from a point in the SWNESW Section 32, T4S, R16E, Stillwater County, for lawn and garden use from April 14 to October 15. The Applicant proposes to irrigate lawn and garden on 3.6 AC. The place of use is generally located in SW Section 32, T4S, R16E, Stillwater County approximately one mile northeast of Nye. The DNRC shall issue a water use permit if an applicant proves the criteria in 85-2-311 MCA are met.

6. Agencies consulted during preparation of the Environmental Assessment:
(include agencies with overlapping jurisdiction)
Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks
Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation
Montana Department of Environmental Quality
Montana Natural Heritage Program
Montana Sage Grouse Habitat Conservation Program
United States Fish and Wildlife Service
United States Natural Resources Conservation Service

Part II. Environmental Review

1. Environmental Impact Checklist:

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

WATER QUANTITY, QUALITY AND DISTRIBUTION

Water quantity **–** The Stillwater River in the reach of the proposed diversion is not listed by the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks as a dewatered concern area. Assessment by the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation indicates that the legally available water at the proposed point of diversion exceeds the requested amount.

Determination: No significant impact.

Water quality **–** According to the Montana Department of Environmental Quality, no uses on the Stillwater River are threatened. The river is classified B-1 indicating its suitability for all uses following conventional treatment. Use of Stillwater River water for lawn and garden irrigation on 3.6 acres has little potential to degrade water quality.

Determination: No significant impact

Groundwater **–** The proposed project could allow infiltration of water applied to lawn and garden irrigation an increase groundwater quantity. The infiltrated amount of water would be small and little change to groundwater quantity is predicted. No change to groundwater quality is likely.

Determination: No significant impact

DIVERSION WORKS – The proposed means of diversion is a pump in the river supplying hoses to irrigate lawn and garden. No construction is planned and the pump is unlikely to modify flow, impact the channel, create barriers to wildlife or alter riparian areas. No dams or wells are proposed.

Determination: No significant impact

UNIQUE, ENDANGERED, FRAGILE OR LIMITED ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES

Endangered and threatened species **–** The Montana Natural Heritage Program lists no plant species of concern in the proposed project area. There are eight animal species of concern including the Grizzly Bear, Golden Eagle, Veery, Peregrine Falcon, Pinyon Jay, Cassin's Finch, Clark's Nutcracker, and Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout. The proposed irrigation of lawn and garden on a residential tract will not change habitat necessary to any species of concern and will not create any barriers to movement. The proposed project is not within Sage Grouse habitat as mapped by the Montana Sage Grouse Habitat Conservation Program.

Determination: No significant impact

Wetlands **–** There are no wetlands within the project area and no wetlands are proposed.

Determination: No impact

Ponds **–** There are no ponds within the project area and no ponds are proposed.

Determination: No Impact

GEOLOGY/SOIL QUALITY, STABILITY AND MOISTURE – The dominant soil type in the project area is Shawa silty clay loam with low slopes. This is a well-drained, non-saline to very slightly saline soil. Lawn and garden irrigation of this soil has no likelihood of causing instability or saline seep. Irrigation may increase moisture content of the soil.

Determination: No significant impact

VEGETATION COVER, QUANTITY AND QUALITY/NOXIOUS WEEDS – Current vegetative cover is grass. The project area was formerly part of agricultural land that has subsequently been subdivided. No substantial change to vegetative cover is proposed. There is a slight possibility that installation of the pump and hoses could establish or spread noxious weeds. It will be the responsibility of the landowner to monitor and prevent noxious weeds.

Determination: No significant impact

AIR QUALITY – Lawn and garden irrigation on 3.6 acres has no potential to alter air quality.

Determination: No impact

HISTORICAL AND ARCHEOLOGICAL SITES – The proposed project is not located on State or Federal Lands.

Determination: Not Applicable

DEMANDS ON ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES OF LAND, WATER, AND ENERGY – No additional impacts on environmental resources are recognized.

Determination: No significant impact

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

LOCALLY ADOPTED ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS AND GOALS – There are no known locally adopted environmental plans or goals.

Determination: No impact

ACCESS TO AND QUALITY OF RECREATIONAL AND WILDERNESS ACTIVITIES – The project area lies adjacent to roads that access recreational and wilderness areas. Lawn and garden irrigation will not affect access.

Determination: No impact

HUMAN HEALTH – Lawn and garden irrigation has no potential to affect human health.

Determination: No impact

PRIVATE PROPERTY - *Assess whether there are any government regulatory impacts on private property rights.*
*Yes___ No__**X**_ If yes, analyze any alternatives considered that could reduce, minimize, or eliminate the regulation of private property rights.*

Determination: No significant impact

OTHER HUMAN ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES - *For routine actions of limited environmental impact, the following may be addressed in a checklist fashion.*

Impacts on:

(a) *Cultural uniqueness and diversity?* No significant impact

(b) *Local and state tax base and tax revenues?* No significant impact

(c) *Existing land uses?* No significant impact

(d) *Quantity and distribution of employment?* No significant impact

(e) *Distribution and density of population and housing?* No significant impact

(f) *Demands for government services?* No significant impact

(g) *Industrial and commercial activity?* No significant impact

(h) *Utilities?* No significant impact

(i) *Transportation?* No significant impact

(j) *Safety?* No significant impact

(k) *Other appropriate social and economic circumstances?* No significant impact

2. ***Secondary and cumulative impacts on the physical environment and human population:***

Secondary Impacts: No secondary impacts are recognized.

Cumulative Impacts: No cumulative impacts are recognized.

3. ***Describe any mitigation/stipulation measures:*** None

4. ***Description and analysis of reasonable alternatives to the proposed action, including the no action alternative, if an alternative is reasonably available and prudent to consider:*** The only reasonable alternative to the proposed action is the no-action alternative. The no-action alternative has no significant environmental advantages over

the proposed project and prevents the Applicant from irrigating lawn and garden on their residential property.

PART III. Conclusion

1. Preferred Alternative: Issue a water use permit if an applicant proves the criteria in 85-2-311 MCA are met.

2 Comments and Responses: None

3. *Finding:*
*Yes___ No_**X**__ Based on the significance criteria evaluated in this EA, is an EIS required?*

If an EIS is not required, explain <u>why</u> the EA is the appropriate level of analysis for this proposed action: This environmental assessment is the appropriate level of analysis because there were no significant environmental impacts recognized.

Name of person(s) responsible for preparation of EA:

Name: Mark Elison
Title: Hydrologist
Date: 2/7/2017